

PHILIP  
THE  
KING

MASEFIELD

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1914



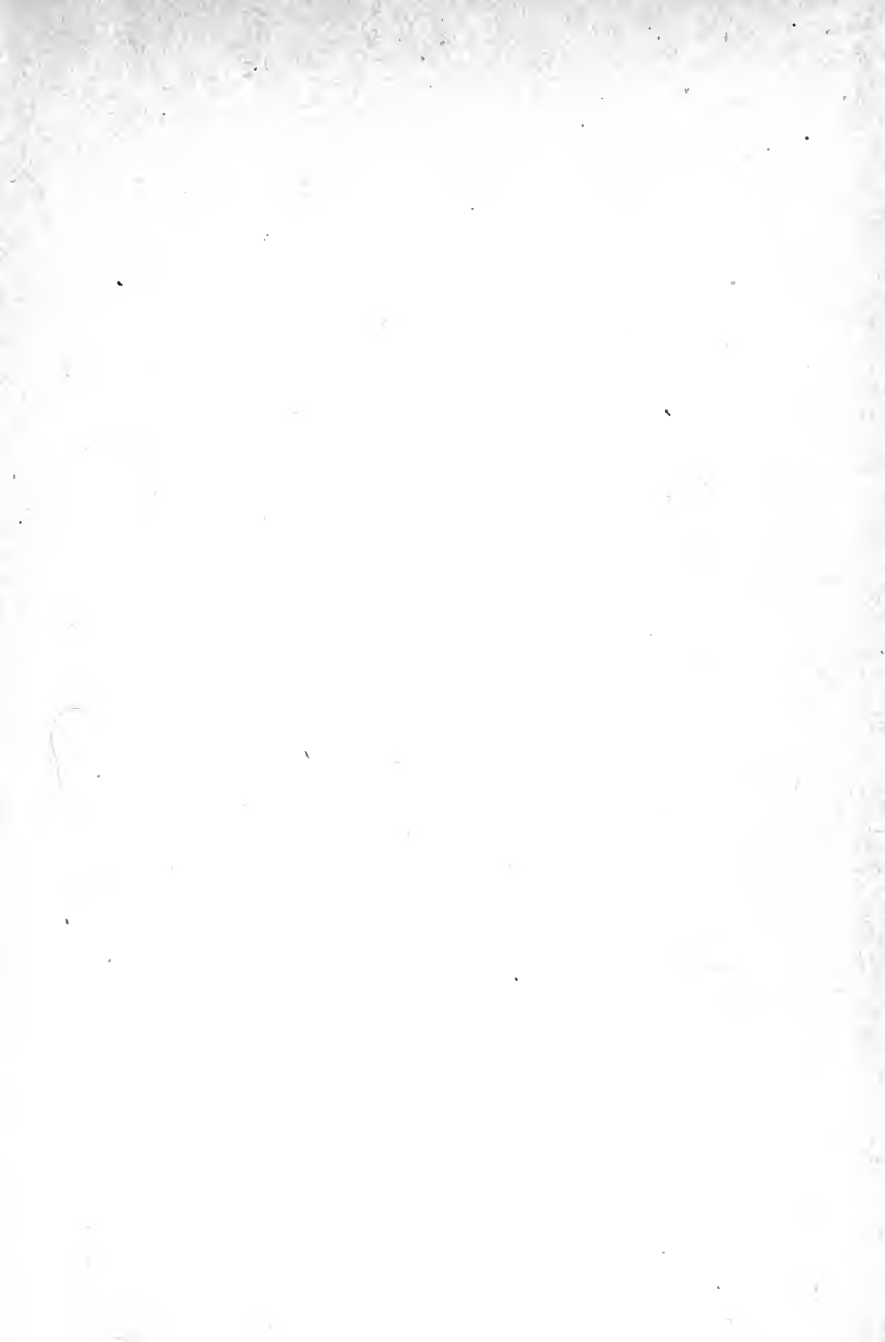
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**PHILIP THE KING**  
**AND OTHER POEMS**



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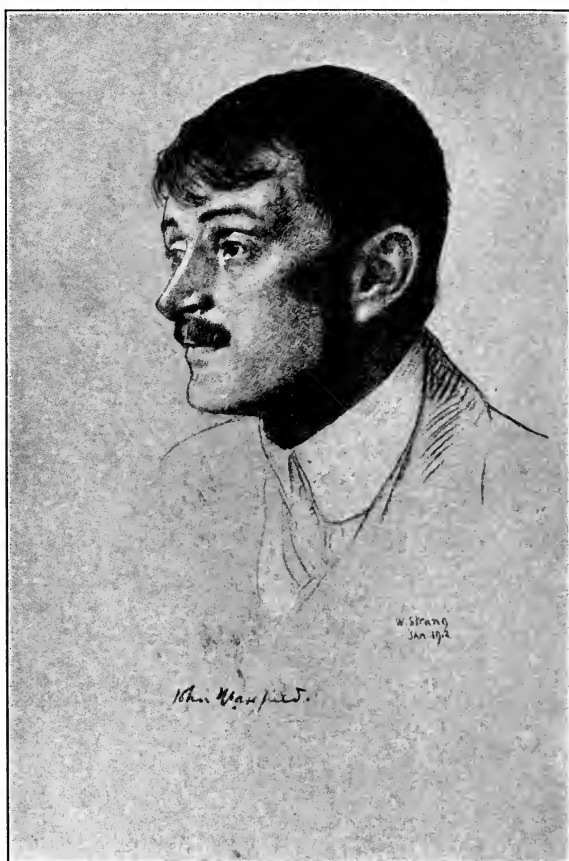
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# PHILIP THE KING

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1914

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To  
MY WIFE



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# **PHILIP THE KING**

**A PLAY IN ONE ACT**

## PERSONS

Philip the Second of Spain  
His Daughter, the Infanta  
An English Prisoner  
A Spanish Captain  
Guards

## SPIRITS

Indians  
Don John of Austria  
Escovedo  
Don Alvaro de Bazan, the Marquis of Santa Cruz  
Alonso de Leyva

## TIME

At dawn in late September, 1588

## SCENE

A little dark cell in Philip's palace



## PHILIP THE KING

PHILIP (*Kneeling*).

Lord, I am that Philip whom Thou hast made King of half the world. Thou knowest, Lord, how great a fleet I have fitted out to destroy the English, who work evil against Thee. Lord, I beseech Thee, keep that great Armada now, as I trust, in battle on the English coast. Protect my ships, O Lord, from fire and pestilence, from tempest and shipwreck, and in the day of battle. Amen. Amen.

Lord, now that the battle is joined, grant us Thy victory, I beseech Thee. Amen. Amen.

Lord, I beseech Thee to have in Thy special keeping my beloved friend, Alonso de Leyva,

now at sea with my fleet. Guard his ways,  
O Lord, that so he may come safely home to  
me. Amen. Amen.

Lord, of Thy mercy, I beseech Thee to  
send to me, if it be Thy will, some word or  
message from my fleet, that I may know  
Thy will concerning it, that my weary heart  
may find peace. Amen. Amen.

*(He rises.)*

*Enter the PRINCESS.*

PRINCESS.

Has no news come?

PHILIP.

None yet.

PRINCESS.

Still nothing?

PHILIP.

No.

PRINCESS.

Two months now since they sailed and still  
no word.

PHILIP.

The wind is foul ; they cannot send.

PRINCESS.

I know.

And yet what tales, what rumours we have  
heard.

How the heart sickens for the want of news.

Is that a courier ?

PHILIP.

No.

PRINCESS.

What if we lose ?

PHILIP.

Why should we lose ?

PRINCESS.

Because of too much pride  
Planning for glory not as scripture bade.

PHILIP.

I am not proud nor hopeful, nor afraid.

But you are trembling, sweet, and heavy-  
eyed.

## PRINCESS.

I am afraid, for all night long  
The spirit of Spain's committed wrong,  
Nourished wherever a life was shed,  
    Stood near my bed;  
And all night long it talked to me  
Of a trouble there is beyond the sea.  
A trouble of war . . . I heard a horn  
    Blowing forlorn,  
And I knew that it came from far away,  
From men of Spain in a pass at bay  
Blowing for help; the beaten call  
None heeds at all.  
And now I fear that we have angered Him  
    Who makes pride dim.

## PHILIP.

What we have done with our might  
Cannot be hateful to God.  
He speaks with dreams in the night  
That the tired heart turn home

And an end of brooding come.  
 My heart has flushed in His praise,  
 The glow in my heart took sail  
 In a fleet that darkens the sprays;  
 Sacrifice may not avail,  
 But the uttermost gift is wise.

PRINCESS.

Yes, I believe that ; and the deed is grand —  
 It is a mighty blow to deal for God.  
 But in my ear there rings  
 Ill-omened words about the pride of kings —  
 “Pride is the evil that destroys a land.”

PHILIP.

Brooding and watching waste you, you must  
 sleep ;  
 The hand of God will bring us through the  
 deep.

PRINCESS.

Amen, my father, but my heart is breaking.

PHILIP.

You are too young for heart-break ; let it be.

PRINCESS.

There was another fear which kept me  
waking :

Spain's unborn monarchs came by night to  
me,

Each holding fewer of the Spanish gems  
Here and abroad, each weaker in the soul.  
With wearier brows and dimmer diadems,  
And feebler fingers giving up control,  
Till, as it seemed, a hundred years from now,  
An idiot child was all the might of Spain,  
And English spirits beat them on the brow,  
Robbing their gems and binding them with  
chain.

And Spain's proud flag was dragged in the  
sea.

And then these shapes lamented, threaten-  
ing me ;

Saying that we began Spain's downfall  
here —

So grimly, father, that I shook with fear.

PHILIP.

Child, these are only dreams. I have  
learned this

Since I have been a king, that our concern  
Is not with Hope nor Fear, but with what is,  
Which, when we follow dreams, we cannot  
learn.

Be patient, child; besides, the wind has  
changed;

God's will must never find our hearts  
estranged:

The wind is north, the news may come to-day.  
Ship after ship is running down the Bay  
With news; God grant that it be happy  
news.

PRINCESS.

Rest till it comes, dear father.

PHILIP.

You can choose,  
You who are young, whether to rest or no ;  
When one is old one sees the hours go.  
Dear, they go fast from withered men like  
me.

You were my little daughter on my knee  
When first this war with England was conceived.

Now you are this . . . , it would not be  
believed,  
And nothing done, and still time hurrying  
by.

We are two grey old partners — Time and I :  
Look at the work we do . . . you talk of  
rest.

PRINCESS.

You call your Captains in and choose the  
best,  
And make him do the work.



PHILIP.

Ah, you're a Queen,  
That is what you would do, but I am King.  
Kings have no beauty to make duty keen;  
They have to supervise with whip and sting.

PRINCESS.

You do not whip men; you are good and  
mild.

PHILIP.

Artists and Kings do what they can, my child,  
Not what they would. It is not easy, dear,  
Working with men, for men are only clay,  
They crumble in the hand, or they betray  
And time goes by, but no results appear —  
Your little hands have happier work than  
mine.

Ah, little daughter, childhood is divine.

PRINCESS.

I am no child now that the fleet has sailed;  
I was till then, but now I realize  
What it would cost my father if it failed.

PHILIP.

Yes, it has cost some life, this enterprise.

PRINCESS.

But all you had to do was give the word.

PHILIP.

Ah, darling, many thousand men have heard  
Orders from me since this attempt began  
Seventeen years ago. Full many a man  
Who helped the earliest outlines of the plot  
Died at his unknown task suspecting not  
What pattern his life's colour helped to weave.  
Child, if I told you, you would not believe  
How this idea has triumphed on unchanged  
Past great commanders' deaths, past faith  
    estranged,  
Past tyranny and bloodshed and ill-hap,  
Treachery striking like a thunder-clap,  
Murder, betrayal, lying, past all these,  
Past the grim days when feelings had to  
    freeze

Lest the great King should drop his mask of  
lies

And hint his purpose to the thwarted spies,  
Past half a world of men and years of thought,  
Past human hope, to be the thing I sought.  
Now that the dice are scattered for the stakes,  
I half forget that old affront of Drake's,  
By which this war with England was begun.  
O child, the labour that must first be done  
Before a King can act ! — unending work.  
All the long days of beating down the Turk,  
Then when Don John had thrust the Cres-  
cent down

(You cannot know) he plotted for the crown ;  
Don John, my Admiral, plotted against me.  
He would have sunk the English in the sea,  
But since he plotted, that was ended too.  
Then a great world of labour still to do,  
The French to check, and then the Portu-  
guese,

Clearing myself a pathway through the seas.  
Then, when my way was clear, my Admiral  
died,  
The Marquis Santa Cruz, the unconquered  
guide,  
The greatest sea commander of known times.  
Seventeen years of subtleties and crimes.

But it is done. I have resolved those years,  
Those men, those crimes, those great at-  
tempts, those tears,  
Sorrows and terrors of a twisted earth,  
Into this fleet, this death, this Dragon's  
birth ;  
I who have never seen it, nor shall see.

PRINCESS.

I shall thank God that it was shown to me ;  
I saw it sail.

PHILIP.

You saw my heart's blood, child.

PRINCESS.

All a long summer day those ships defiled.  
 I never saw so many nor so grand ;  
 They wandered down the tide and cleared  
     the land,  
 And ranked themselves like pikemen, clump  
     to clump.  
 Then in the silence came the Admiral's  
     trump,  
 And from those hundreds of expectant ships,  
 From bells and cannonade and sailors' lips,  
 And from the drums and trumpets of the  
     foot  
 Burst such a roaring thunder of salute  
 As filled my heart with wonder like a cup.  
 They cheered St. James's banner going up —  
 Golden St. James, whose figure blew out  
     fair,  
 High on the flagship's mast in the blue air,  
 Rippling the gold. Then all the city bells,

Fired like the singing spheres some spirit  
impels,

Rang in the rocking belfries, the guns roared,  
Each human soul there shook like tautened  
cord.

And to that Christian march the singing  
priests

Bore up the blessed banners. Even the  
beasts

Ramped at the challenge of that shouting  
crowd.

Then, as the wind came fair, the Armada  
bowed.

Those hundreds of great vessels, ranked in  
line,

Buried their bows and heaped the bubbled  
brine

In gleams before them. So they marched;  
the van,

Led by De Leyva, like slipped greyhounds, ran

To spy the English. On the right and left  
 By Valdes and his friend the seas were cleft ;  
 Moncada's gallies weltered like a weir,  
 Flanking Recalde, bringing up the rear,  
 While in the midst St. James's banner  
     marched,  
 Blowing towards England till the flagpole  
     arched.  
 Onward they swept the sea, the flagship's  
     side  
 Smoked from her cannon's hail ; she took  
     her stride,  
 Leaned and stretched forward.

I was conscious then

That I beheld the greatest fleet that men  
 Ever sent seaward ; all the world was there,  
 All nations that begem the crown you  
     wear,  
 Pikemen of Rome, whose settled pikes had  
     stood

Stern in full many a welter of man's blood.  
Cunning Levantines, armed with crooked  
swords,

Venetians bronzed, the ocean's overlords,  
Pisans and knights of Malta, Ferrarese,  
Passionate half-bloods from the Indian seas,  
Hollanders, Austrians, even English, come  
To bring again religion to their home ;  
Spain too, our Andalusians, and the hale  
Iberian Basquers used to hunt the whale —  
The flower of the knighthood of the world  
Mustered beneath the banner you unfurled.

\* \* \* \* \*

And that was but the half, for there in  
France

Was Parma's army ready to advance,  
Death-coupled bloodhounds straining to the  
slip,

Waiting your navy's coming to take ship.  
Father, such power awed me.



PHILIP.

Time and I

Worked for long years.

PRINCESS.

And when it had passed by  
The bells were silent, and a sigh arose  
Of joy in that fleet's pride, and grief for  
those

Who, even if all went well, had looked their  
last

On men and women who had made their  
past.

Then darkness came, and all that I could  
see

Was the horizon where the fleet must be —  
A dimming skyline with a setting star.

It was as though they died; and now, who  
knows

What has befallen them, or where they  
are?

And night by sleepless night my trouble  
grows.

This daily silence has been hard to bear,  
But now I dread news worse.

PHILIP.

We must prepare,  
Hoping the best, but ready for the worst;  
But patient still, for rumour must come  
first —

Rumour and broken news and seamen's  
lies;

Patience, expecting nothing, is most wise.  
If God vouchsafes it, we shall hear to-day.  
Lighten your heart, my daughter.

PRINCESS.

I will pray —  
Pray for a Spanish triumph.

PHILIP.

Pray for me.  
Pray for God's cause adventured on the sea.

PRINCESS.

I will; God help my prayer.

PHILIP.

God help us both.

*[She goes.]*

Lord, I have laboured long to keep my  
oath,

And since my loved one died it has been  
hard.

O Lord, my God, in blessed mercy guard  
My only friend De Leyva, now at sea;  
Keep him, O Lord, and bring him home to  
me.

O Lord, be thou his bulwark and his  
guide;

I am so lonely since my loved one died.

How splendidly the nations hold their way,  
Marching with banners through the fields  
of Time!

Who sees the withered King weary and grey,  
Prompting it all with secret lust or crime?  
Who guesses at the heavy brain behind?  
I am Earth's greatest man; the world is  
blind.

*(He droops over his papers. Starting up.)*

I have still strength, and I must read these  
scrolls,

Or else all goes to ruin; I must read.

*(He sleeps.)*

VOICES.

Philip!

PHILIP.

Who calls?

*The INDIANS enter.*

VOICES.

We are the Indian souls,  
Loosed from the gold-mines where our  
brothers bleed.

We swell the tale of blood: we dug you  
gold;

We bore your burdens till we died of  
thirst ;

We sweated in the mines or shook with  
cold,

Washing the gravel which the blast had  
burst.

We dived for pearls until our eyeballs  
bled ;

You burned us till we told where treasure  
lay.

We were your Indian slaves, but we are  
dead ;

Our red account is cast and you must pay.

A VOICE.

Our lives paid for your fleet ; you pay for  
us.

The unjustly killed restore the balance thus.

A VOICE.

They flung my little baby to the hounds.

A VOICE.

They took my daughter from me for their  
lust.

A VOICE.

Even the weak are strong beyond life's  
bounds;  
We myriad weak add power to the  
thrust.

VOICES.

Philip! Philip! Philip!

We gather from over the sea  
To the justice that has to be  
While the blind red bull goes on.

Philip! Philip! Philip!

We who were ciphers slain  
In a tale of the pride of Spain  
Are a part of her glory gone.

A VOICE.

We see them where our will can help their  
foes.

A VOICE.

Quick, brother, quick! another galleon  
goes!

Waken those sleeping gunners by the fire,  
Or she'll escape unracked. [*They fade away.*

PHILIP.

The voices tire.

They go. I dreamed. I slept. My heavy  
head

Is drowsed. What man is that?

(DON JOHN *appears, with ESCOVEDO be-  
hind him.*)

VOICE OF DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA.

I am the dead;

I am your brother, Philip — brother John.

PHILIP.

You corpse-fetch from the unclean grave,  
begone!

I had no brother.

DON JOHN.

Would you never had!

PHILIP.

You were a landmark of my father's sin,  
Never my brother.

DON JOHN.

I was that bright lad,  
Your father's son, my brother; I helped  
win  
Great glory for you, Philip.

PHILIP.

I agreed

To overlook your bastardy, my friend,  
So long as your bright talents served my  
need;  
But you presumed, and so it had to end.

DON JOHN.

My talents served you well.

PHILIP.

They did, at first.



DON JOHN.

I won the Battle of Lepanto for you.

PHILIP.

And afterwards you killed my troops with  
thirst,

Following a crazy scheme which overbore  
you.

DON JOHN.

Not crazy, unsuccessful.

PHILIP.

Poor vain ghost,  
Poor flickering candle that was bright  
awhile.

DON JOHN.

I was the man whom Europe worshipped  
most,

One with a mighty plan which you thought  
guile.

Why did you kill me, Philip?

PHILIP.

You betrayed me,

Or would have, traitor, had I not been wise.

DON JOHN.

I was your board's best piece, you should  
have played me,

Now I am dead and earth is in my eyes.

I could have won you England. I had  
planned

To conquer England. I had all prepared  
Ships, soldiers, money, but your cruel hand  
Killed me, and nothing's done and noth-  
ing's dared.

PHILIP.

You planned to conquer England and be  
King;

Those who obstruct my path I sweep aside.

DON JOHN.

Brother, there is a time for everything;

That was the time for England, but  
I died;

Now you attempt too late,

The powers have closed the gate,

Destiny enters by another door,  
The lost chance comes no more.

THE VOICE OF ESCOVEDO.

Philip, he tells the truth. We could have  
won  
England for you, we were no plotters then.

VOICES.

Philip, you were betrayed, you were un-  
done.  
You had the moment, but you killed the  
men.

ESCOVEDO.

The liar, Perez, tricked you. O great  
King!  
We would have added England to your  
crown,  
Now the worms cling  
About our lips deep down.  
You had me stabbed at midnight going  
home

That man of Perez' stabbed me in the  
back.

And then I could not stir, down on the  
loam ;

The sky was full of blood, the stars were  
black.

And then I knew my wife and children  
waited

But that I could not come ; a moving hand  
Had interposed a something fated

'Twixt us and what we planned.

DON JOHN.

You had me poisoned in that Holland den,  
Outcast, alone, without the help of men.

We planned a glorious hour

Hoisting the banner of Spain

On the top of London Tower,

With England a Spanish fief.

Life cannot happen again,

And doing dies with the brain ;

Autumn ruins the flower  
And after the flower the leaf.

VOICES.

Philip, Philip, Philip!  
The evil men do has strength,  
It gathers behind the veils  
While the unjust thing prevails.  
While the pride of life is strong,  
But the balance tips at length,  
And the unjust things are tales,  
The pride of life is a song.

PHILIP.

I kept my purpose while you lived. Shall I  
Be weaker, now that you are dead, you  
things?

What can such reedy wretches do but die  
Standing against the purposes of Kings?

DON JOHN.

Do? We can thwart you.

VOICES.

And we will, we will;  
All Spain's unjustly murdered work you ill.  
Gather against him, gather, mock him  
down.

THE VOICE OF THE MARQUIS OF SANTA  
CRUZ.

Scatter, you shadows, fly. Philip, great  
King.

You vultures gathered in an unclean ring;  
Away, you shadows, scatter.

They are gone,

Philip.

*The MARQUIS enters.*

PHILIP.

Who calls?

SANTA CRUZ.

Master.

PHILIP.

Let me dream on.

Whose voice was that? It warned me of  
defeat.

SANTA CRUZ.

I am that Santa Cruz who built your fleet,  
And died to make it good. It was my  
child.

I call because my work has been defiled.

PHILIP.

Why rail, uneasy soul?

SANTA CRUZ.

If I had spent

Less life in that, I should be still alive,  
Commanding what I built to my content,  
Driving the English slaves as conquerors  
drive.

Why did you give away my splendid sword,  
Forged by a never-conquered captain's  
brain,

Into the hoof-hand of an ambling lord,  
Useless in all things, but to ruin Spain?  
Would God I had but guessed it! Would  
my stars

Had shown me clearer what my death  
would bring,

I would have burned those galleons, guns  
and spars,

Soldiers and all, and so have stopped this  
thing.

And doing that I should have served you  
well,

And brought less ruin on this lovely land.

What folly from the unfed brain of hell  
Made you promote that thing to my com-  
mand? —

Folly from which so many men must die.

PHILIP.

We stand against all comers, Time and I.  
I chose the Duke because I wanted one . . .  
Who . . .

SANTA CRUZ.

Give no reason for the evil done.  
Souls wrestle from the ever deedless grave



To do, not to hear reason. Oh, great King,  
You still may save the ruin of this thing!

PHILIP.

You speak of ruin. Tell me what you see.

SANTA CRUZ.

Ruin that threatens, but need never be.  
Be silent, Philip; listen while I tell  
What you must do.

PHILIP.

You are a voice from hell;  
I will not listen to these obscene dreams.

SANTA CRUZ.

Life is a heavy cloud, through which come  
gleams.

Oh, Philip, let me speak! Philip, I say,  
One way can still be tried; I see the way.  
You must do this, but listen.

PHILIP.

I still doubt.

SANTA CRUZ.

Listen, great King; the light is dying out.  
You are fading from me, Philip; they are  
coming.

Before it is too late for ever send . . .

PHILIP.

Send?

SANTA CRUZ.

Yes.

PHILIP.

To whom?

SANTA CRUZ.

To . . .

VOICES.

Drown his voice with drumming;  
Pipe with the Inca conch, the Indian flute.  
What red flowers spring from this blood-  
sprinkled root!

PHILIP.

What name was that you said?

SANTA CRUZ.

Wait, Philip — wait;

They are so many and so full of hate.

VOICES.

Call to your monarch, Marquis — call again.

PHILIP.

Something he meant is knocking at my  
brain —

Knocking for entrance. Marquis!

SANTA CRUZ.

Philip! King!

PHILIP.

What must I do?

SANTA CRUZ.

Oh, fiends!

VOICES.

Ah, conquerors, sing!

Now we have triumphed.

We have torn the flag.

Dance in a ring, victorious spirits, dance;

Brought to a byword is the Spanish brag,

And ruined is the grand inheritance.

Mourn, wretched Philip, for your plans are  
checked;

Your colonies defenceless; your sweet faith  
Mocked by the heretics; your ships are  
wrecked;

The strength of Spain has dwindled to a  
wraith.

Aha! you beaten King, you blinded fool!  
Scream, for the empire tumbles from your  
rule.

PHILIP.

God will deliver me; you are but words  
Called in the night-time by malignant birds  
But who are you?

*The figure of DE LEYVA enters.*

VOICE OF DE LEYVA.

I am De Leyva, come  
Out of the sea, my everlasting home,  
To whisper comfort to my ruined friend.  
Dear, I am dead, but friendship cannot end;  
Love does not die, and I am with you here.  
Often in sorrow you will feel me near,

Feel me, but never speak, nor hear me speak.  
Philip, whatever bitter Fate may wreak  
On Spain and you, remember I am here,  
The dead are bound to those they held most  
dear.

PHILIP.

Dreams of the night. I dreamed De Leyva  
came.

VOICES.

Awake to hear the story of your shame.

*(They cry. A gun is shot off. Bells.)*

PHILIP.

*(Rousing.)* I dreamed I was defeated like  
those men

Whom I defeated; I have felt their woe.

What is this noise? A message?

Enter then.

PRINCESS.

A prisoner comes with news of victory.

PHILIP.

So.

Victory comes! We win!

PRINCESS.

The fleet has won!

PHILIP.

Thanks be to God on high.

PRINCESS.

His will be done.

PHILIP.

Lord, help me use this victory for Thy praise.

Lord, Thou hast burst this night of many  
days

With glorious morning and my heart is full.

O God, my God, Thy ways are wonderful!

Bring me the prisoner.

PRINCESS.

He brought this letter.

*An Englishman is brought in.*

PHILIP.

You are an Englishman?

PRISONER.

Yes, your Majesty.

PHILIP.

This letter says that you can tell me how things have fared. Tell me your story.

PRISONER.

I was at sea, my lord, fishing, some fifteen miles south-west from Falmouth. We were not expecting the Spanish fleet, our cruisers had said it was not coming. It was hazy summer weather and early morning. We could hear that we were among a big fleet, and when the haze lifted your ships were all round us, so we were taken aboard an admiral's ship. A dark man the admiral was, with a very quick way ; he was not the chief admiral, but an Admiral Recalde, with the rearguard.

PHILIP.

Where was the English fleet at that time?  
Was it expecting us?

PRISONER.

No, your honour. It was windbound in Plymouth, unprepared, as I told your admiral. Then I was taken down below.

PHILIP.

Did our fleet enter Plymouth, then?

PRISONER.

No, my lord, and I could not think why, for the wind held and they had only to sail straight in. The day passed.

The next day there was firing, and I thought "The English have got out of the trap at least," but the firing died down, and I concluded the English were beaten.

PHILIP.

Yes?

PRISONER.

I thought the ships would put ashore then to take what they had won, but they kept at sea some days, though there was firing every day, sometimes very heavy. They said



they were burning all the English towns as they passed, and then going to France to fetch an army; and after some nights I was brought ashore in Calais to come to your Majesty.

PHILIP.

What did you see in Calais?

PRISONER.

It was dark night, my lord, when they sent me in. I saw the road full of shipping, lit up like a town.

PHILIP.

What was the feeling among you English prisoners? That the Spaniards had prospered?

PRISONER.

Yes, my lord. You had reached your army, which was all your intent. You had only to take it across the Channel; the wind was fair for that.

PHILIP.

So then you started for Spain. You know no more of what happened?

PRISONER.

No, my lord, except that looking back from a hilltop, I saw a great glare over Calais.

PHILIP.

Something was burning there?

PRISONER.

It was the bonfires, my lord, to give them light; they were embarking the army. Then in France later on we heard that Drake had been sunk off Calais with fifteen ships. A man said he had seen it. That is all I know, my lord.

PHILIP.

What you say will be proved. You will be returned to England. Treat this man well.

[*Exit* PRISONER.]

PRINCESS.

Father, what blessed news!

PHILIP.

We have not failed ;  
But then he hardly knew. The letter here  
Shows that our navy partly has prevailed.

PRINCESS.

The news has spread.

CRIES WITHOUT.

Long live King Philip! Cheer!

CRIES.

Cheer our great King! Long live our noble  
King.

Beat "Santiago," drummers.

PRINCESS.

Hark! they sing.  
The court is dark with people, but more  
come.

CRIES.

Long live King Philip!

## A GREAT VOICE.

Silence for the drum!  
And when the drum beats, we will lift our  
thanks  
Till his heart triumphs.

Silence in the ranks!  
Eyes front! O people, listen! Our attempt  
Has triumphed more than our desires dreamt.  
England is ours. Give thanks. Sound  
trumpets. Sing!

## CRIES.

Philip, Philip the King! God save the  
King!

Philip the conqueror! Philip!

*(A strange cry.)*

## PRINCESS.

Oh, look! look! . . .  
Just as they cheered, the palace banners  
shook,  
They took it for a sign.

The guards are there,  
Look, and the monks are forming in the  
square

Bringing the blessed relics. Oh, my dear!  
I am so happy. Listen how they cheer.  
Father, they're cheering because Spain has  
won.

All you have hoped and striven for is done.  
I hardly dare believe it.

CRIES.

Long live Spain.

PRINCESS.

O, there are horsemen, I must look again!

CRIES.

There is the Princess at the window. See?  
God save you, little lady. Which is she?  
There. Is the King there? No. He must  
be. Yes.

God save your Grace. He's there with the  
Princess.

PHILIP.

Stand farther back; they saw you.

PRINCESS.

Oh, not now!

They called 'God save me,' father; let me  
bow.

PHILIP.

Bow, then, my dear.

CRIES.

God save your pretty face.

PRINCESS.

Father, do come, they want you.

CRIES.

Bless your Grace.

God save the King — King Philip.

PRINCESS.

Father dear,

They're calling for you; stand beside me  
here.

PHILIP.

Not yet. It is not time.

CRIES.

Philip the King!

PRINCESS.

Oh, father, come! It is a thrilling thing  
To know they won, and hear these shouts of  
praise.

CRIES.

God save the King! God send him many  
days!

Philip the King, the conqueror of the sea!  
St. James for Spain, King Philip, victory!  
King Philip! Santiago!

PRINCESS.

Father.

PHILIP.

Wait!

Kings must not yield them at too cheap a  
rate.

VOICES.

Philip the King! The English are destroyed!  
God save him! Victory! We are overjoyed!

Let the bells ring! King Philip! Philip!  
King!

Ring the Cathedral bells — ay, let them ring!  
St. James for Spain! King Philip! Clear  
the guns! (*Guns shot off.*)

King Philip, fire — fire all at once!

King Philip, fire! King Philip, fire! St.  
James!

Thank God, the King of kings, the Name of  
names!

Fire, King Philip! Santiago, fire!

Give thanks to God who gives us our desire!

Philip, God save and bless him!

PHILIP (*going to window*).

I will speak.

VOICES.

Fire! He's there! King Philip!

PHILIP.

Man is weak.

VOICES.

He's there!



PRINCESS.

Oh, father, look!

PHILIP.

Stand at my side.

VOICES.

God bless and guard our blessed country's  
guide!

King Philip, fire! The King!

*(The bells begin.)*

PRINCESS.

Oh, bells of joy!

And now the monks are singing.

THE MONKS.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord of lords,  
Who saves His faithful from the Egyptian  
swords.

VOICES.

Amen. God save the King.

THE MONKS.

He made the Red Sea waters to divide,  
And led our Israel through with Him for guide.

VOICES.

Amen. God save the King! Philip the  
King!

PHILIP.

O God, I thank Thee for this marvellous  
thing.

THE MONKS.

He whelmed King Pharaoh's army in the sea,  
And of His mercy gave us victory.

VOICES.

The famous kings are blown like chaff  
Before Thy fiery car.  
Thou smit'st th' ungodly with Thy staff . . .  
Philip the King! God save our prudent  
King!

PHILIP.

My subjects, whom God gave me for His  
ends . . .

PRINCESS.

Whatever pain you bore, this makes amends.

VOICES.

Speak to your loving hearts, your Majesty.

PHILIP.

I do His will; to God the glory be.

THE MONKS.

Praise Him, O sun and moon, morning and  
evening star!

The kings who mocked His word are broken  
in the war.

Praise Him with heart and soul! Praise  
Him with voice and lute!

VOICES.

The King! God save the King! Silence!  
He speaks. Salute!

THE MONKS.

In the dark night, ere dawn, we will arise  
and sing

Glory to God on high, the praises of our King.

VOICES.

The King is going to speak. He makes a  
sign.

God bless your noble Grace and all your line!

God bless you, Sir, for all your thought for us !  
The conquering King, Philip victorious !  
Philip the great and good ! Hush ! Silence !  
Peace !

Philip ! Attention ! Bid the ringers cease.  
The King is going to speak ; he raised his  
hand.

PRINCESS.

Dear, to be loved as you are is most grand.  
Speak to them, father ; thank them for their  
love.

THE MONKS.

I will exalt the Name of God above.

VOICES.

The bells are hushed. Be quiet ! Silence  
all !

PHILIP.

I thought I heard, far off, a funeral call ;  
As in your dream, a melancholy cry.

PRINCESS.

It was the fifes.

PHILIP.

No ; listen !

PRINCESS.

That sound ?

PHILIP.

Ay.

PRINCESS.

It was the crowd outside. Now they are  
still.

PHILIP.

No ; it was singing coming up the hill —  
Sad singing, too.

PRINCESS.

I did not hear it.

PHILIP.

There !

PRINCESS.

The bells have left a trembling in the air.

PHILIP.

No ; it was voices. I will speak one word  
To these below. There is the noise I heard

(RECALDE'S *men are heard singing.*)

## RECALDE'S MEN.

Out of the deep, out of the deep, we come,  
Preserved from death at sea to die at home.  
Mercy of God alone preserved us thus;  
In the waste sea Death laid his hand on us.

## PRINCESS.

The Black Monks in a penitential psalm.

## VOICES.

Philip the King!

## PHILIP.

I'll wait.

## PRINCESS.

Oh, speak!

## PHILIP.

Be calm!

I cannot cross God's word with words of  
mine.

## VOICES.

Quiet, you singers!

## PRINCESS.

They are men in line.

(RECALDE'S men are heard singing.)

RECALDE'S MEN.

We called the world too small with boast-  
ful lips ;

Now we are ghosts crawled from the bones  
of ships.

We were most glorious at our setting sail ;

Now our knees knock, our broken spirits fail.

Our banner is abased and all our pride :

A tale of ships that sank and men who died.

PRINCESS.

Listen ! Who are they ?

PHILIP.

What is it they sing ?

VOICES.

The King is speaking. Silence for the  
King !

Let the King speak ; be still. You ragged  
crew,

Have you no manners ? Silence ! Who are  
you ?

## RECALDE'S MEN.

We are the beaten men, the men accursed,  
Whose bitter glory 'tis t' have borne the  
worst.

## PRINCESS.

They are not monks.

## PHILIP.

Nor beggars.

## PRINCESS.

Now they stand.

## VOICES.

Yon navy's sweepings driven back to  
land.

Go to the hens and tunnies; beat them  
down

Back to the sea you ran from; back and  
drown.

## RECALDE'S MEN.

Pity our shame, you untried heroes here.  
Defeat's not victory, but 'tis bought as  
dear.



PHILIP.

They are sailors from the fleet.

PRINCESS.

They come with news.

They are ragged to the skin, they have no shoes.

PHILIP.

The crowd is still.

PRINCESS.

Why do they come like this?

PHILIP.

Listen; their Captain tells them what it is.

RECALDE'S MEN.

Darken the bedrooms for us, people all,  
And let us turn our faces to the wall,  
And let the darkness and the silence make  
A quiet time in which our hearts may  
break.

*(A murmur runs through the Court.)*

PRINCESS.

Father, what is it?

PHILIP.

Child, the Act of One  
Who chastens earthly kings, whose Will  
be done.

PRINCESS.

It means that we are beaten?

PHILIP.

Who can tell?

PRINCESS.

Father.

PHILIP.

Dear child, even defeat is well.

PRINCESS.

I thought that we were happy.

PHILIP.

Watch the square.

Now tell me calmly what is passing there.

PRINCESS.

The Captain comes, the crowd is making  
way.

PHILIP.

Who is it? Can you see?

PRINCESS.

His hair is grey.

He walks bareheaded, slowly, and the crowd  
Shrink as though Death were passing in  
his shroud.

PHILIP.

Worse news has come. Who is the man?

PRINCESS.

His face . . .

I seem to know him, but the air is strange.  
He puts the touch of Death upon the place.  
Nothing but Death could fashion such a  
change.

He carries something. Now the people  
kneel.

We are defeated, Father.

PHILIP.

What I feel

I cover. Go within. Misfortune stuns  
None but the tender. [*Exit PRINCESS.*]

VOICES.

Give us back our sons.

Philip, give back our sons, our lovely sons.

THE PALACE GUARD.

Halt! Who comes there?

A VOICE.

Spain and the Empire.

THE GUARD.

Pass,

Spain and the Empire.

VOICES.

They are drowned. Alas!

Philip, give back our sons, our lovely sons.

*Enter MESSENGER, carrying an Admiral's chain.*

PHILIP.

What brings you to me, Captain?

MESSENGER.

This gold chain . . .

Bears the twelve badges of the strength of

Spain

Once linked in glory, Philip, but now  
loosed.

*(Detaching link from link.)*

Castilla, Leon, Aragon, and these,  
Palestine, Portugal, the Sicilies,  
Navarre, Granada, the Valencian State,  
The Indies, East and West, the Archducate,  
The Western Mainland in the Ocean Sea.  
Those who upheld their strength have  
ceased to be.

I, who am dying, King, have seen their graves.  
Philip, your Navy is beneath the waves.

PHILIP.

He who in bounty gives in wisdom takes.

MESSENGER.

O King, forgive me, for my spirit breaks ;  
I saw those beaches where the Grange de-  
scends  
White with unburied corpses of stripped  
friends.

PHILIP.

I grieve that Spain's disaster brings such  
loss.

MESSENGER.

From Pentland to the Groyne the tempests  
toss

Unshriven Spaniards driving with the tide.  
They were my lovely friends and they have  
died,

Far from wind-broken Biscay, far from  
home,

With no anointing chrism but the foam.

PHILIP.

The dead will rise from unsuspected slime ;  
God's chosen will be gathered in God's time.

MESSENGER.

King, they died helpless ; our unwieldy fleet  
Made such a target to the English guns  
That we were riddled through like sifted  
wheat.

We never came to grappling with them  
once.

They raked us from a distance, and then  
ran.

Each village throughout Spain has lost a  
man ;

The widows in the seaports fill the streets.

PHILIP.

Uncertain chance decides the fate of fleets.

MESSENGER.

Now the North Sea is haunted for all  
time

By miserable souls whose dying words  
Cursed the too proud adventure as a crime.  
Our broken galleons house the gannet-  
birds.

The Irish burn our Captain's bones for  
lime.

O misery that the might of England  
wrought !

## PHILIP.

Christ is the only remedy for thought  
When the mind sickens. We are pieces  
    played,  
Not moving as we will, but as we are  
    made;  
Beaten and spurred at times like stubborn  
    steeds,  
That we may go God's way. Your spirit  
    bleeds,  
Having been proved in trouble past her  
    strength.  
Give me the roll in all its ghastly length.  
Which of my friends survive, if any live?

## MESSENGER.

Some have survived, but all are fugitive.  
Your Admiral in command is living still;  
Michael Oquendo too, though he is ill,  
Dying of broken heart and bitter shame.  
Valdes is prisoner, Manrique the same.



PHILIP.

God willed the matter; they are not to  
blame.

Thank God that they are living. Name  
the rest.

MESSENGER.

They are all dead . . . with him you loved  
the best.

PHILIP.

I dreamed De Leyva died, so it is true?

MESSENGER.

Drowned on the Irish coast with all his  
crew.

After enduring dying many days  
The sea has given him quiet. Many ways  
Lead men to death, and he a hard one  
trod,  
Bearing much misery, like a knight of God.

PHILIP.

Amen. Go on.

## MESSENGER.

Hugh de Monçada died,  
Shot in his burning ship by Calais side,  
Cheering his men to save her. Pimentel  
Sank in a galleon shambled like a hell  
Rather than yield, and in a whirl of flames  
Pedro Mendoza, Captain of St. James,  
Stood with Don Philip thrusting boarders  
back

Till their Toledan armour was burnt black,  
And both their helms ran blood. And there  
they fell,

Shot down to bleed to death. They per-  
ished well,

Happy to die in battle for their King  
Before defeat had fallen on their friends;  
Happier than most, for where the merrows  
sing

Paredes and his brother met their ends,  
And Don Alarcon, cast alive ashore,

Was killed and stripped and hanged upon a  
tree.

And young Mendoza, whom the flagship  
bore,

Died of starvation and of misery.

But hundreds perished, King; why men-  
tion these?

Battle and hunger, heart-break, and the  
seas

Have overwhelmed the chivalry of Spain.

PHILIP.

Misfortune, after effort, brings no stain.

Perhaps I underjudged the English fleet.

How was it that the Spaniards met defeat?

What evil fortune brought about our fall?

MESSENGER.

Their sailors and their cannon did it all.

PHILIP.

Yet when the fleet reached Calais all went  
well.

MESSENGER.

Our woes began there.

PHILIP.

Tell me what befell.

MESSENGER.

We were to ship the troops in Calais Road ;  
They lay encamped, prepared to go aboard.  
To windward still the English fleet abode —  
Still as in port when peace has been restored.

The wind and sea were fair,  
We lay at anchor there ;  
The stars burned in the air,  
The men were sleeping,  
When in the midnight dark  
Our watchman saw a spark  
Suddenly light a bark  
With long flames leaping.

Then, as they stood amazed,  
Others and others blazed ;

Then terror set them crazed,  
They ran down screaming :  
“Fire-ships are coming! Wake  
Cast loose, for Jesus’ sake!  
Eight fire-ships come from Drake —  
Look at their gleaming!”

Roused in the dark from bed,  
We saw the fire show red,  
And instant panic spread  
Through troops and sailors ;  
They swarmed on deck unclad,  
They did what terror bade,  
King, they were like the mad  
Escaped from jailers.

Some prayed for mercy, some  
Rang bells or beat the drum,  
As though despair had come  
At hell’s contriving ;

Captains with terror pale  
Screamed through the dark their hail,  
“Cut cable, loose the sail,  
And set all driving!”

Heading all ways at once,  
Grinding each other's guns,  
Our blundering galleons  
Athwart-hawse galleys,  
Timbers and plankings cleft,  
And half our tackling reft,  
Your grand Armada left  
The roads of Calais.

Weary and overwrought  
We strove to make all taut;  
But when the morning brought  
The dawn to light us,  
Drake, with the weather gage,  
Made signal to engage,

And, like a pard in rage,  
Bore down to fight us.

Nobly the English line  
Trampled the bubbled brine;  
We heard the gun-trucks whine  
To the taut laniard.  
Onwards we saw them forge,  
White billowing at the gorge.  
"On, on!" they cried, "St. George!  
Down with the Spaniard!"

From their van squadron broke  
A withering battle-stroke,  
Tearing our plankèd oak  
By straits asunder,  
Blasting the wood like rot  
With such a hail of shot,  
So constant and so hot  
It beat us under.

The English would not close ;  
They fought us as they chose,  
Dealing us deadly blows  
For seven hours.  
Lords of our chiefest rank  
The bitter billow drank,  
For there the English sank  
Three ships of ours.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then the wind forced us northward from  
the fight ;  
We could not ship the army nor return ;  
We held the sea in trouble through the night,  
Watching the English signals blink and burn.  
The English in a dim cloud kept astern ;  
All night they signalled, while our shattered  
ships  
Huddled like beasts beneath the drovers'  
whips.

\* \* \* \* \*



At dawn the same wind held; we could  
not strive.

The English drove us north as herdsmen  
drive.

\* \* \* \* \*

Under our tattered flags,  
With rigging cut to rags,  
Our ships like stricken stags  
Were heaped and hounded.  
Caught by the unknown tide,  
With neither chart nor guide,  
We fouled the Holland side,  
Where four more grounded.

Our water-casks were burst,  
The horses died of thirst,  
The wounded raved and curst,  
Uncared, untended.  
All night we heard the crying  
Of lonely shipmates dying;

We had to leave them lying.

So the fight ended.

PHILIP.

God gives His victory as He wills. But  
this

Was not complete destruction. What  
thing worse

Came to destroy you?

MESSENGER.

An avenging curse,  
Due for old sins, destroyed us.

PHILIP.

Tell the tale.

MESSENGER.

O King, when morning dawned it blew a  
gale,

But still the English followed, and we fled  
Till breakers made the dirty waters pale.  
We saw the Zealand sandbanks right ahead,  
Blind in a whirling spray that gave us dread ;

For we were blown there, and the water  
shoaled.

The crying of the leadsmen at the lead,  
Calling the soundings, were our death-  
bells tolled.

We drifted down to death upon the sands —  
The English drew away to watch us drown;  
We saw the bitter breakers with grey  
hands

Tear the dead body of the sandbank brown.  
We could do nothing, so we drifted down  
Singing the psalms for death — we who  
had been

Lords of the sea and knights of great re-  
nown,

Doomed to be strangled by a death un-  
clean.

PHILIP.

So there the ships were wrecked?

## MESSENGER.

Time had not struck.

O King, we learned how blessed mercy  
saves :

Even as our forefoot grounded on the  
muck,

Tripping us up to drown us in the waves,  
A sudden windshift snatched us from our  
graves

And drove us north ; and now another woe,  
Tempest unending, beat our ships to  
staves —

A never-dying gale with frost and snow.

Now our hearts failed, for food and water  
failed ;

The men fell sick by troops, the wounded  
died.

They washed about the wet decks as we  
sailed

For want of strength to lift them overside.  
Desolate seas we sailed, so grim, so wide,  
That ship by ship our comrades disap-  
peared.

With neither sun nor star to be a guide,  
Like spirits of the wretched dead we steered.

Till, having beaten through the Pentland  
Pass,

We saw the Irish surf, with mists of spray  
Blowing far inland, blasting trees and grass,  
And gave God thanks, for we espied a bay  
Safe, with bright water running down the  
clay —

A running brook where we could drink and  
drink.

But drawing near, our ships were cast  
away,

Bilged on the rocks ; we saw our comrades  
sink . . .

Or worse : for those the breakers cast ashore  
The Irish killed and stripped ; their bodies  
white

Lay naked to the wolves — yea, sixty  
score —

All down the windy beach, a piteous sight.  
The savage Irish watched by bonfire light  
Lest more should come ashore ; we heard  
them there

Screaming the bloody news of their delight.  
Then we abandoned hope and new despair.

And now the fleet is sunken in the sea,  
And all the seamen, 'all the might of Spain,  
Are dead, O King, and out of misery,  
Never to drag at frozen ropes again —  
Never to know defeat, nor feel the pain  
Of watching dear companions sink and die.  
Death's everlasting armistice to the brain  
Gives their poor griefs quietus ; let them lie.

I, like a ghost returning from the grave,  
Come from a stricken ship to tell the news  
Of Spanish honour which we could not  
save,

Nor win again, nor even die to lose;  
And since God's hidden wisdom loves to  
bruise

Those whom He loves, we, trembling in  
despair,

Will watch our griefs to see God's finger  
there,

And make His will our solace and excuse.

Defeat is bitter and the truth is hard —  
Spain is defeated, England has prevailed;  
This is the banner which I could not guard,  
And this the consecrated sword which  
failed.

Do with your dying Captain as you will.

*(He lays down sword and banner.)*

## PHILIP.

I, from my heart, thank God, from whose  
great hand

I am so helped with power, I can still  
Set out another fleet against that land.

Nor do I think it ill

If all the running water takes its course  
While there are unspent fountains at the  
source.

He sendeth out His word and melteth  
them.

Take back your standard, Captain. As  
you go,

Bid the bells toll and let the clergy  
come.

Then in the city by the strike of drum  
Proclaim a general fast. In bitter days  
The soul finds God, God us.

*[Exit Captain.]*



PHILIP (*alone*).

De Leyva, friend,

Whom I shall never see, never again,

This misery that I feel is over Spain.

O God, beloved God, in pity send

That blessed rose among the thorns — an  
end :

Give a bruised spirit peace.

(*He kneels. A muffled march of the drums.*)

CURTAIN.



## OTHER POEMS



## THE "WANDERER"

ALL day they loitered by the resting ships,  
Telling their beauties over, taking stock;  
At night the verdict left my messmates'  
lips,

"The *Wanderer* is the finest ship in dock."

I had not seen her, but a friend, since  
drowned,  
Drew her, with painted ports, low, lovely,  
lean,  
Saying, "The *Wanderer*, clipper, outward  
bound,

The loveliest ship my eyes have ever seen —

"Perhaps to-morrow you will see her sail.  
She sails at sunrise": but the morrow showed

No *Wanderer* setting forth for me to hail ;  
Far down the stream men pointed where  
she rode,

Rode the great trackway to the sea, dim,  
dim,

Already gone before the stars were gone.

I saw her at the sea-line's smoky rim  
Grow swiftly vaguer as they towed her on.

Soon even her masts were hidden in the haze  
Beyond the city ; she was on her course  
To trample billows for a hundred days ;  
That afternoon the norther gathered force,

Blowing a small snow from a point of east.  
"Oh, fair for her," we said, "to take her  
south."

And in our spirits, as the wind increased,  
We saw her there, beyond the river mouth,

Setting her side-lights in the wildering dark,  
To glint upon mad water, while the gale  
Roared like a battle, snapping like a shark,  
And drunken seamen struggled with the  
sail.

While with sick hearts her mates put out of  
mind

Their little children left astern, ashore,  
And the gale's gathering made the darkness  
blind,

Water and air one intermingled roar.

Then we forgot her, for the fiddlers played,  
Dancing and singing held our merry crew ;  
The old ship moaned a little as she swayed.  
It blew all night, oh, bitter hard it blew !

So that at midnight I was called on deck  
To keep an anchor-watch : I heard the sea

Roar past in white procession filled with  
wreck ;

Intense bright frosty stars burned over me,

And the Greek brig beside us dipped and  
dipped,

White to the muzzle like a half-tide rock,  
Drowned to the mainmast with the seas she  
shipped ;

Her cable-swivels clanged at every shock.

And like a never-dying force, the wind  
Roared till we shouted with it, roared until  
Its vast vitality of wrath was thinned,  
Had beat its fury breathless and was still.

By dawn the gale had dwindled into flaw,  
A glorious morning followed : with my friend  
I climbed the fo'c's'le-head to see ; we saw  
The waters hurrying shorewards without end.



Haze blotted out the river's lowest reach ;  
Out of the gloom the steamers, passing by,  
Called with their sirens, hooting their sea-  
speech ;  
Out of the dimness others made reply.

And as we watched, there came a rush of  
feet  
Charging the fo'c's'le till the hatchway  
shook.  
Men all about us thrust their way, or beat,  
Crying, "*The Wanderer!* Down the river!  
Look!"

I looked with them towards the dimness ;  
there  
Gleamed like a spirit striding out of night,  
A full-rigged ship unutterably fair,  
Her masts like trees in winter, frosty-  
bright.

Foam trembled at her bows like wisps of  
wool;

She trembled as she towed. I had not  
dreamed

That work of man could be so beautiful,  
In its own presence and in what it seemed.

"So, she is putting back again," I said.

"How white with frost her yards are on the  
fore."

One of the men about me answer made,

"That is not frost, but all her sails are  
tore,

"Torn into tatters, youngster, in the gale;

Her best foul-weather suit gone." It was  
true,

Her masts were white with rags of tattered  
sail

Many as gannets when the fish are due.

Beauty in desolation was her pride,  
Her crowned array a glory that had been ;  
She faltered tow'rds us like a swan that died,  
But although ruined she was still a queen.

"Put back with all her sails gone," went the  
word ;

Then, from her signals flying, rumour ran,  
"The sea that stove her boats in killed her  
third ;

She has been gutted and has lost a man."

So, as though stepping to a funeral march,  
She passed defeated homewards whence she  
came,

Ragged with tattered canvas white as starch,  
A wild bird that misfortune had made tame.

She was refitted soon : another took

The dead man's office ; then the singers hove

Her capstan till the snapping hawsers shook ;  
Out, with a bubble at her bows, she drove.

Again they towed her seawards, and again  
We, watching, praised her beauty, praised  
her trim,  
Saw her fair house-flag flutter at the main,  
And slowly saunter seawards, dwindling  
dim ;

And wished her well, and wondered, as she  
died,  
How, when her canvas had been sheeted  
home,  
Her quivering length would sweep into her  
stride,  
Making the greenness milky with her foam.

But when we rose next morning, we discerned  
Her beauty once again a shattered thing ;

Towing to dock the *Wanderer* returned,  
A wounded sea-bird with a broken wing.

A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray  
Told of a worse disaster than the last ;  
Like draggled hair dishevelled hung the  
    stay,  
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag ;  
Word went among us how the broken spar  
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,  
And killed her mate a half-day from the  
    bar.

She passed to dock upon the top of flood.  
An old man near me shook his head and  
    swore :

"Like a bad woman, she has tasted blood —  
There'll be no trusting in her any more."

We thought it truth, and when we saw her  
there

Lying in dock, beyond, across the stream,  
We would forget that we had called her fair,  
We thought her murderess and the past a  
dream.

And when she sailed again, we watched in awe,  
Wondering what bloody act her beauty  
planned,

What evil lurked behind the thing we saw,  
What strength was there that thus annulled  
man's hand,

How next its triumph would compel man's  
will

Into compliance with external Fate,  
How next the powers would use her to work  
ill

On suffering men ; we had not long to wait.

For soon the outcry of derision rose,  
"Here comes the *Wanderer*!" the expected  
cry.

Guessing the cause, our mockings joined with  
those  
Yelled from the shipping as they towed her  
by.

She passed us close, her seamen paid no  
heed

To what was called: they stood, a sullen  
group,

Smoking and spitting, careless of her need,  
Mocking the orders given from the poop.

Her mates and boys were working her; we  
stared.

What was the reason of this strange return,  
This third annulling of the thing prepared?  
No outward evil could our eyes discern.

Only like one who having formed a plan  
Beyond the pitch of common minds, she  
    sailed,  
Mocked and deserted by the common man,  
Made half divine to me for having failed.

We learned the reason soon ; below the town  
A stay had parted like a snapping reed,  
"Warning," the men thought, "not to take  
    her down."

They took the omen, they would not proceed.

Days passed before another crew would sign.  
The *Wanderer* lay in dock alone, unmanned,  
Feared as a thing possessed by powers malign,  
Bound under curses not to leave the land.

But under passing Time fear passes too ;  
That terror passed, the sailors' hearts grew  
    bold.



We learned in time that she had found a crew  
And was bound out and southwards as of  
old.

And in contempt we thought, "A little while  
Will bring her back again, dismantled,  
spoiled.

It is herself ; she cannot change her style ;  
She has the habit now of being foiled."

So when a ship appeared among the haze,  
We thought, "The *Wanderer* back again" ;  
but no,  
No *Wanderer* showed for many, many days,  
Her passing lights made other waters glow.

But we would often think and talk of her,  
Tell newer hands her story, wondering, then,  
Upon what ocean she was *Wanderer*,  
Bound to the cities built by foreign men.

And one by one our little conclave thinned,  
Passed into ships and sailed and so away,  
To drown in some great roaring of the wind,  
Wanderers themselves, unhappy fortune's  
prey.

And Time went by me making memory dim,  
Yet still I wondered if the *Wanderer* fared  
Still pointing to the unreach'd ocean's rim,  
Brightening the water where her breast was  
bared.

And much in ports abroad I eyed the ships,  
Hoping to see her well-remembered form  
Come with a curl of bubbles at her lips  
Bright to her berth, the sovereign of the storm.

I never did, and many years went by,  
Then, near a Southern port, one Christmas  
Eve,

I watched a gale go roaring through the sky,  
Making the caldrons of the clouds upheave.

Then the wrack tattered and the stars  
appeared,

Millions of stars that seemed to speak in  
fire ;

A byre cock cried aloud that morning neared,  
The swinging wind-vane flashed upon the  
spire.

And soon men looked upon a glittering earth,  
Intensely sparkling like a world new-born ;  
Only to look was spiritual birth,  
So bright the raindrops ran along the thorn.

So bright they were, that one could almost  
pass

Beyond their twinkling to the source, and  
know

The glory pushing in the blade of grass,  
That hidden soul which makes the flowers  
grow.

That soul was there apparent, not revealed,  
Unearthly meanings covered every tree,  
That wet grass grew in an immortal field,  
Those waters fed some never-wrinkled sea.

The scarlet berries in the hedge stood out  
Like revelations but the tongue unknown ;  
Even in the brooks a joy was quick : the  
trout  
Rushed in a dumbness dumb to me alone.

All of the valley was aloud with brooks ;  
I walked the morning, breasting up the fells,  
Taking again lost childhood from the rooks,  
Whose cawing came above the Christmas  
bells.

I had not walked that glittering world before,  
But up the hill a prompting came to me,  
"This line of upland runs along the shore :  
Beyond the hedgerow I shall see the sea."

And on the instant from beyond away  
That long familiar sound, a ship's bell, broke  
The hush below me in the unseen bay.  
Old memories came: that inner prompting  
spoke.

And bright above the hedge a seagull's  
wings  
Flashed and were steady upon empty air.  
"A Power unseen," I cried, "prepares these  
things ;  
Those are her bells, the *Wanderer* is there."

So, hurrying to the hedge and looking down,  
I saw a mighty bay's wind-crinkled blue

Ruffling the image of a tranquil town,  
With lapsing waters glittering as they grew.

And near me in the road the shipping swung,  
So stately and so still in such great peace  
That like to drooping crests their colours  
hung,

Only their shadows trembled without cease.

I did but glance upon those anchored ships.  
Even as my thought had told, I saw her plain ;  
Tense, like a supple athlete with lean hips,  
Swiftness at pause, the *Wanderer* come  
again —

Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,  
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,  
Sparkling, as though the midnight's rain  
were rime,

Like a man's thought transfigured into fire.

And as I looked, one of her men began  
To sing some simple tune of Christmas day;  
Among her crew the song spread, man to man,  
Until the singing rang across the bay;

And soon in other anchored ships the men  
Joined in the singing with clear throats, until  
The farm-boy heard it up the windy glen,  
Above the noise of sheep-bells on the hill.

Over the water came the lifted song —  
Blind pieces in a mighty game we swing;  
Life's battle is a conquest for the strong;  
The meaning shows in the defeated thing.

## AUGUST, 1914

How still this quiet cornfield is to-night !  
By an intenser glow the evening falls,  
Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light ;  
Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.

The windows glitter on the distant hill ;  
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold  
Stumble on sudden music and are still ;  
The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.

An endless quiet valley reaches out  
Past the blue hills into the evening sky ;  
Over the stubble, cawing, goes a rout  
Of rooks from harvest, flagging as they fly.

So beautiful it is, I never saw  
So great a beauty on these English fields,



Touched by the twilight's coming into awe,  
Ripe to the soul and rich with summer's  
yields.

\* \* \* \* \*

These homes, this valley spread below me  
here,

The rooks, the tilted stacks, the beasts in pen,  
Have been the heartfelt things, past-speaking  
dear

To unknown generations of dead men,

Who, century after century, held these farms,  
And, looking out to watch the changing sky,  
Heard, as we hear, the rumours and alarms  
Of war at hand and danger pressing nigh.

And knew, as we know, that the message  
meant

The breaking off of ties, the loss of friends,

Death, like a miser getting in his rent,  
And no new stones laid where the trackway  
ends.

The harvest not yet won, the empty bin,  
The friendly horses taken from the stalls,  
The fallow on the hill not yet brought in,  
The cracks unplastered in the leaking walls.

Yet heard the news, and went discouraged  
home,  
And brooded by the fire with heavy mind,  
With such dumb loving of the Berkshire  
loam  
As breaks the dumb hearts of the English  
kind,

Then sadly rose and left the well-loved  
Downs,  
And so by ship to sea, and knew no more

The fields of home, the byres, the market  
towns,

Nor the dear outline of the English shore,

But knew the misery of the soaking trench,  
The freezing in the rigging, the despair  
In the revolting second of the wrench  
When the blind soul is flung upon the air,

And died (uncouthly, most) in foreign lands  
For some idea but dimly understood  
Of an English city never built by hands  
Which love of England prompted and made  
good.

\* \* \* \* \*

If there be any life beyond the grave,  
It must be near the men and things we love,  
Some power of quick suggestion how to save,  
Touching the living soul as from above.

An influence from the Earth from those dead  
    hearts

So passionate once, so deep, so truly kind,  
That in the living child the spirit starts,  
Feeling companioned still, not left behind.

Surely above these fields a spirit broods,  
A sense of many watchers muttering near  
Of the lone Downland with the forlorn woods  
Loved to the death, inestimably dear.

A muttering from beyond the veils of Death  
From long-dead men, to whom this quiet  
    scene

Came among blinding tears with the last  
    breath,  
The dying soldier's vision of his queen.

All the unspoken worship of those lives  
Spent in forgotten wars at other calls

Glimmers upon these fields where evening  
drives

Beauty like breath, so gently darkness falls.

Darkness that makes the meadows holier  
still,

The elm-trees sadden in the hedge, a sigh  
Moves in the beech-clump on the haunted  
hill,

The rising planets deepen in the sky,

And silence broods like spirit on the brae,  
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight  
runs

Over the grasses of the ancient way  
Rutted this morning by the passing guns.

## THE RIVER

ALL other waters have their time of peace,  
Calm, or the turn of tide or summer drought ;  
But on these bars the tumults never cease,  
In violent death this river passes out.

Brimming she goes, a bloody-coloured rush  
Hurrying her heaped disorder, rank on rank,  
Bubbleless speed so still that in the hush  
One hears the mined earth dropping from the  
bank,

Slipping in little falls whose tingeings drown,  
Sunk by the waves for ever pressing on.  
Till with a stripping crash the tree goes  
down,  
Its washing branches flounder and are gone.

Then, roaring out aloud, her water spreads,  
Making a desolation where her waves  
Shriek and give battle, tossing up their heads,  
Tearing the shifting sandbanks into graves,

Changing the raddled ruin of her course  
So swiftly, that the pilgrim on the shore  
Hears the loud whirlpool laughing like a horse  
Where the scurfed sand was parched an hour  
before.

And always underneath that heaving tide  
The changing bottom runs, or piles, or quakes  
Flinging immense heaps up to wallow wide,  
Sucking the surface into whirls like snakes.

If anything should touch that shifting sand,  
All the blind bottom sucks it till it sinks;  
It takes the clipper ere she comes to land,  
It takes the thirsting tiger as he drinks.

And on the river pours — it never tires ;  
Blind, hungry, screaming, day and night the  
    same  
Purposeless hurry of a million ires,  
Mad as the wind, as merciless as flame.

\*        \*        \*        \*        \*

There was a full-rigged ship, the *Travancore*,  
Towing to port against that river's rage —  
A glittering ship made sparkling for the  
    shore,  
Taut to the pins in all her equipage.

Clanging, she topped the tide ; her sails were  
    furled,  
Her men came loitering downwards from the  
    yards ;  
They who had brought her half across the  
    world,  
Trampling so many billows into shards,



Now looking up, beheld their duty done,  
The ship approaching port, the great masts  
    bare,  
Gaunt as three giants striding in the sun,  
Proud, with the colours tailing out like hair.

So, having coiled their gear, they left the  
    deck;  
Within the fo'c'sle's gloom of banded steel,  
Mottled like wood with many a painted speck,  
They brought their plates and sat about a  
    meal.

Then pushing back the tins, they lit their  
    pipes,  
Or slept, or played at cards, or gently spoke,  
Light from the portholes shot in dusty  
    stripes  
Tranquilly moving, sometimes blue with  
    smoke.

These sunbeams sidled when the vessel rolled,  
Their lazy yellow dust-strips crossed the floor,  
Lighting a man-hole leading to the hold,  
A man-hole leaded down the day before.

Like gold the solder on the man-hole shone ;  
A few flies threading in a drowsy dance  
Slept in their pattern, darted, and were gone.  
The river roared against the ship's advance.

And quietly sleep came upon the crew,  
Man by man drooped upon his arms and  
slept ;  
Without, the tugboat dragged the vessel  
through,  
The rigging whined, the yelling water leapt,  
  
Till blindly a careering wave's collapse  
Rose from beneath her bows and spouted  
high,

Spirting the fo'c'sle floor with noisy slaps;  
A sleeper at the table heaved a sigh,

And lurched, half-drunk with sleep, across  
the floor,  
Muttering and blinking like a man insane,  
Cursed at the river's tumult, shut the door,  
Blinked, and lurched back and fell asleep  
again.

Then there was greater silence in the room,  
Ship's creakings ran along the beams and  
died,  
The lazy sunbeams loitered up the gloom,  
Stretching and touching till they reached the  
side.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet something jerking in the vessel's course  
Told that the tug was getting her in hand

As, at a fence, one steadies down a horse,  
To rush the whirlpool on Magellan Sand ;

And in the uneasy water just below  
Her Mate inquired "if the men should stir  
And come on deck?" Her Captain answered

"No,  
Let them alone, the tug can manage her."

Then, as she settled down and gathered  
speed,

Her Mate inquired again "if they should  
come

Just to be ready there in case of need,  
Since, on such godless bars, there might be  
some."

But "No," the Captain said, "the men have  
been

Boxing about since midnight, let them be.

The pilot's able and the ship's a queen,  
The hands can rest until we come to quay."

They ceased, they took their stations; right  
ahead

The whirlpool heaped and sucked; in tenor  
tone

The steady leadsman chanted at the lead,  
The ship crept forward trembling to the bone.

And just above the worst a passing wave  
Brought to the line such unexpected stress]  
That as she tossed her bows her towrope  
gave,

Snapped at the collar like a stalk of cress.

Then, for a ghastly moment, she was loose,  
Blind in the whirlpool, groping for a guide,  
Swinging adrift without a moment's truce,  
She struck the sand and fell upon her side.

And instantly the sand beneath her gave  
So that she righted and again was flung,  
Grinding the quicksand open for a grave,  
Straining her masts until the steel was sprung.

The foremast broke ; its mighty bulk of steel  
Fell on the fo'c'sle door and jammed it tight ;  
The sand-rush heaped her to an even keel,  
She settled down, resigned, she made no  
fight,

But, like an overladen beast, she lay  
Dumb in the mud with billows at her lips,  
Broken, where she had fallen in the way,  
Grinding her grave among the bones of ships.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the first crashing of the mast, the men  
Sprang from their sleep to hurry to the  
deck ;

They found that Fate had caught them in a  
pen,  
The door that opened out was jammed with  
wreck.

Then, as, with shoulders down, their gathered  
strength  
Hove on the door, but could not make it  
stir,  
They felt the vessel tremble through her  
length;  
The tug, made fast again, was plucking  
her.

Plucking, and causing motion, till it seemed  
That she would get her off; they heard her  
screw  
Mumble the bubbled rip-rap as she steamed;  
“Please God, the tug will shift her!” said  
the crew.

“She’s off !” the seamen said ; they felt her  
glide,  
Scraping the bottom with her bilge, until  
Something collapsing clanged along her side ;  
The scraping stopped, the tugboat’s screw  
was still.

“She’s holed !” a voice without cried ; “holed  
and jammed —  
Holed on the old *Magellan*, sunk last June.  
I lose my ticket and the men are damned ;  
They’ll drown like rats unless we free them  
soon.

“My God, they shall not !” and the speaker  
beat  
Blows with a crow upon the foremast’s  
wreck ;  
Minute steel splinters fell about his feet,  
No tremour stirred the ruin on the deck.



And as their natures bade, the seamen learned  
That they were doomed within that buried  
door ;

Some cursed, some raved, but one among  
them turned

Straight to the manhole leaded in the floor,

And sitting down astride it, drew his knife,  
And staidly dug to pick away the lead,

While at the ports his fellows cried for life :  
“Burst in the door, or we shall all be dead !”

For like a brook the leak below them clucked.  
They felt the vessel settling ; they could feel  
How the blind bog beneath her gripped and  
sucked.

Their fingers beat their prison walls of steel.

And then the gurgling stopped — the ship  
was still.

She stayed ; she sank no deeper — an arrest

Fothered the pouring leak ; she ceased to fill.  
She trod the mud, drowned only to the breast.

And probing at the well, the captain found  
The leak no longer rising, so he cried :

“She is not sinking — you will not be  
drowned ;  
The shifting sand has silted up her side.

“Now there is time. The tug shall put  
ashore

And fetch explosives to us from the town ;  
I'll burst the house or blow away the door  
(It will not kill you if you all lie down).

“Be easy in your minds, for you'll be free  
As soon as we've the blast.” The seamen  
heard

The tug go townwards, butting at the sea ;  
Some lit their pipes, the youngest of them  
cheered.

But still the digger bent above the lid,  
Gouging the solder from it as at first,  
Pecking the lead, intent on what he did ;  
The other seamen mocked at him or cursed.

And some among them nudged him as he  
picked.

He cursed them, grinning, but resumed his  
game ;

His knife-point sometimes struck the lid and  
clicked.

The solder-pellets shone like silver flame.

And still his knife-blade clicked like ticking  
time

Counting the hour till the tug's return,  
And still the ship stood steady on the  
slime,

While Fate above her fingered with her urn.

Then from the tug beside them came the hail :

“They have none at the stores, nor at the  
dock,

Nor at the quarry, so I tried the gaol.

They thought they had, but it was out of  
stock.

“So then I telephoned to town ; they say  
They’ve sent an engine with some to the  
pier ;

I did not leave till it was on its way,  
A tug is waiting there to bring it here :

“It can’t be here, though, for an hour or  
more ;

I’ve lost an hour in trying, as it is.

For want of thought commend me to the  
shore.

You’d think they’d know their river’s ways  
by this.”

“So there is nothing for it but to wait,”  
The Captain answered, fuming. “Until  
then,  
We’d better go to dinner, Mr. Mate.”  
The cook brought dinner forward to the  
men.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another hour of prison loitered by;  
The strips of sunlight stiffened at the port,  
But still the digger made the pellets fly,  
Paying no heed to his companions’ sport,  
  
While they, about him, spooning at their tins,  
Asked if he dug because he found it cold,  
Or whether it was penance for his sins,  
Or hope of treasure in the forward hold.

He grinned and cursed, but did not cease  
to pick,  
His sweat dropped from him when he bent  
his head,

His knife-blade quarried down, till with a  
click

Its grinded thinness snapped against the  
lead.

Then, dully rising, brushing back his sweat,  
He asked his fellows for another knife.

"Never," they said; "man, what d'ye  
hope to get?"

"Nothing," he said, "except a chance for  
life."

"Havers," they said, and one among them  
growled,

"You'll get no knife from any here to  
break.

You've dug the manhole since the door  
was fouled,

And now your knife's broke, quit, for Jesus'  
sake."

But one, who smelt a bargain, changed his  
tone,  
Offering a sheath-knife for the task in hand  
At twenty times its value, as a loan  
To be repaid him when they reached the  
land.

And there was jesting at the lender's greed  
And mockery at the digger's want of sense,  
Closing with such a bargain without need,  
Since in an hour the tug would take them  
thence.

But "Right," the digger said. The deal  
was made  
He took the borrowed knife, and sitting  
down  
Gouged at the channelled solder with the  
blade,  
Saying, "Let be, it's better dig than drown."

And nothing happened for a while ; the heat  
Grew in the stuffy room, the sunlight slid,  
Flies buzzed about and jostled at the meat,  
The knife-blade clicked upon the manhole  
lid :

And one man said, "She takes a hell of  
time  
Bringing the blaster," and another snored ;  
One, between pipe-puffs, hummed a smutty  
rhyme,  
One, who was weaving, thudded with his  
sword.

It was as though the ship were in a dream,  
Caught in a magic ocean, calm like death,  
Tranced, till a presence should arise and  
gleam,  
Making the waters conscious with her  
breath



It was so drowsy that the river's cries,  
Roaring aloud their ever-changing tune,  
Came to those sailors like the drone of flies,  
Filling with sleep the summer afternoon.

So that they slept, or, if they spoke, it was  
Only to worry lest the tug should come :  
Such power upon the body labour has  
That prison seemed a blessed rest to some,

Till one man leaning at the port-hole,  
stared,

Checking his yawning at the widest stretch,  
Then blinked and swallowed, while he  
muttered, scared,

“That blasting-cotton takes an age to  
fetch.”

Then swiftly passing from the port he went  
Up and then down the fo’c’sle till he stayed,

Fixed at the port-hole with his eyes intent,  
Round-eyed and white, as if he were  
afraid,

And muttered as he stared, "My God!  
she is.

She's deeper than she was, she's settling  
down.

That palm-tree top was steady against this,  
And now I see the quay below the town.

"Look here at her. She's sinking in her  
tracks.

She's going down by inches as she stands;  
The water's darker and it stinks like flax,  
Her going down is churning up the sands."

And instantly a panic took the crew,  
Even the digger blenched; his knife-blade's  
haste

Cutting the solder witnessed that he knew  
Time on the brink with not a breath to  
waste.

While far away the tugboat at the quay  
Under her drooping pennon waited still  
For that explosive which would set them  
free,  
Free, with the world a servant to their will.

Then from a boat beside them came a blare,  
Urging that tugboat to be quick; and men  
Shouted to stir her from her waiting there,  
“Hurry the blast, and get us out of pen.

“She’s going down. She’s going down,  
man! Quick!”

The tugboat did not stir, no answer came;  
They saw her tongue-like pennon idly lick  
Clear for an instant, lettered with her name.

Then droop again. The engine had not  
come,

The blast had not arrived. The prisoned  
hands

Saw her still waiting though their time had  
come,

Their ship was going down among the sands,

Going so swiftly now, that they could see  
The banks arising as she made her bed ;  
Full of sick sound she settled deathward,  
she

Gurgled and shook, the digger picked the  
lead.

And, as she paused to take a final plunge,  
Prone like a half-tide rock, the men on deck  
Jumped to their boats and left, ere like a  
sponge

The river's rotten heart absorbed the wreck ;

And on the perilous instant ere Time struck  
The digger's work was done, the lead was  
cleared,

He cast the manhole up; below it muck  
Floated, the hold was full, the water leered.

All of his labour had but made a hole  
By which to leap to death; he saw black  
dust

Float on the bubbles of that brimming  
bowl,

He drew a breath and took his life in trust,

And plunged head foremost into that black  
pit,

Where floating cargo bumped against the  
beams.

He groped a choking passage blind with grit,  
The roaring in his ears was shot with  
screams.

So, with a bursting heart and roaring ears  
He floundered in that sunk ship's inky  
womb,

Drowned in deep water for what seemed  
like years,

Buried alive and groping through the tomb,

Till suddenly the beams against his back  
Gave, and the water on his eyes was bright ;  
He shot up through a hatchway foul with  
wrack

Into clean air and life and dazzling light,

And striking out, he saw the fo'c'sle gone,  
Vanished, below the water, and the mast  
Standing columnar from the sea ; it shone  
Proud, with its colours flying to the last.

And all about, a many-wrinkled tide  
Smoothed and erased its eddies, wander-  
ing chilled,

Like gluttoned purpose, trying to decide  
If its achievement had been what it willed.

And men in boats were there; they helped  
him in.

He gulped for breath and watched that  
patch of smooth,

Shaped like the vessel, wrinkle into grin,  
Furrow to waves and bare a yellow tooth.

Then the masts leaned until the shroud-  
screws gave.

All disappeared — her masts, her colours,  
all.

He saw the yardarms tilting to the grave;  
He heard the siren of a tugboat call,

And saw her speeding, foaming at the bow,  
Bringing the blast-charge that had come  
too late.

He heard one shout, "It isn't wanted  
now."

Time's minute-hand had been the hand of  
Fate.

Then the boats turned; they brought him  
to the shore.

Men crowded round him, touched him, and  
were kind;

The Mate walked with him, silent, to the  
store.

He said, "We've left the best of us behind."

Then, as he wrung his sodden clothes, the  
Mate

Gave him a drink of rum, and talked  
awhile

Of men and ships and unexpected Fate;  
And darkness came and 'cloaked the river's  
guile,



So that its huddled hurry was not seen,  
Only made louder, till the full moon  
climbed

Over the forest, floated, and was queen.  
Within the town a temple-belfry chimed.

Then, upon silent pads, a tiger crept  
Down to the river-brink, and crouching  
there

Watched it intently, till you thought he  
slept

But for his ghastly eye and stiffened hair.

Then, trembling at a lust more fell than his,  
He roared and bounded back to coverts  
lone,

Where, among moonlit beauty, slaughter  
is,

Filling the marvellous night with myriad  
groan.

## WATCHING BY A SICK-BED

I HEARD the wind all day,  
And what it was trying to say.  
I heard the wind all night  
Rave as it ran to fight;  
After the wind the rain,  
And then the wind again  
Running across the hill  
As it runs still.

And all day long the sea  
Would not let the land be,  
But all night heaped her sand  
On to the land;  
I saw her glimmer white  
All through the night,  
Tossing the horrid hair  
Still tossing there.

And all day long the stone  
Felt how the wind was blown;  
And all night long the rock  
Stood the sea's shock;  
While, from the window, I  
Looked out, and wondered why,  
Why at such length  
Such force should fight such strength.

## NOTE

*The River*, which is contained in this volume, was first published in the *Century Magazine*; *The Wanderer* in *Harper's Magazine*; *Watching by a Sick-Bed* and *August, 1914* in *Harper's Weekly*. I thank the editors of these periodicals for permission to reprint them here.

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